

Getting Out of the Dog House



The booster pump at Cibecue Community School with the top of the protective dog house removed.

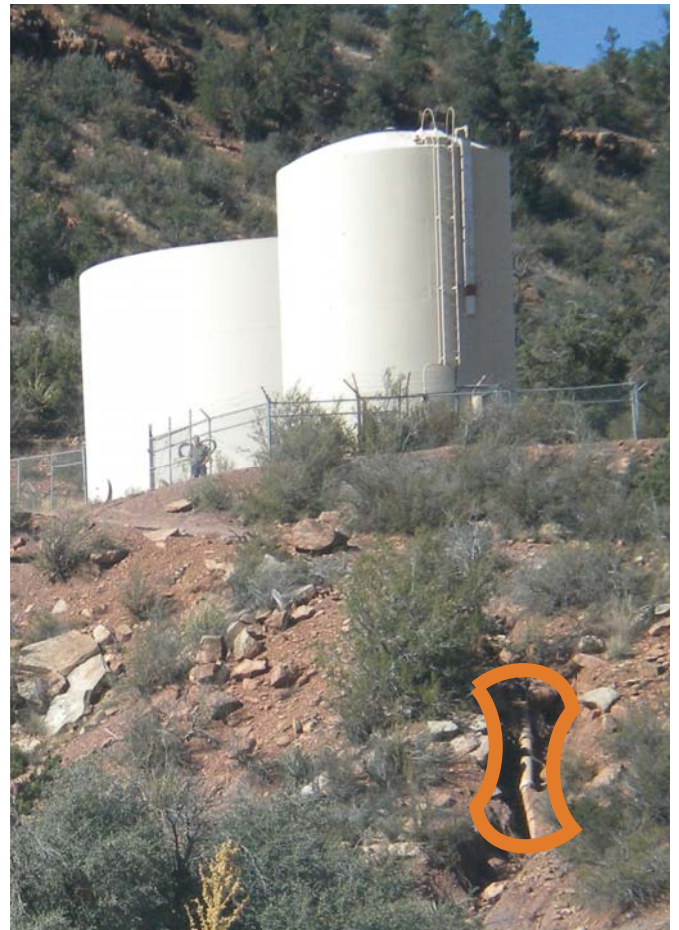
OFMC is funding a water treatment system Minor Improvement and Repair (MI&R) project at Cibecue Community School in Arizona, one of several locations that were subject to an “administrative order” from the EPA. Repairing water systems and improving water quality at Indian Affairs-funded locations that the EPA cited in its administrative order is just the initial step in the overall assessing of conditions at an estimated 211 Indian Affairs-funded water treatment systems throughout Indian Country. The assessment is meant to gauge whether the systems are meeting federal water quality standards and then, as funding allows, address issues of water quality that result from design or operation problems.

OFMC’s effort to ensure quality drinking water at all Indian Affairs-funded systems coincides with the spirit of the 2011 Settlement Agreement with the EPA, which focused on an egregious water quality problem—elevated arsenic levels in [Keams Canyon, Ariz., drinking water](#)—but is relevant to other water quality problems that exist at Indian Affairs-funded water systems. Many of these water systems are at BIE-funded schools while others, like Keams Canyon, are public water systems serving Indian Country.

Federal law requires school facility managers, who often operate these systems, to regularly take samples for a variety of measures of water quality and (health) safety. The frequency of sampling and the measures used to

Why OFMC Is Being Proactive Regarding Indian Affairs’ 211 Water Systems

The Interior Department and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reached an agreement in 2011 to address alleged violations at schools and public water systems owned, operated, or otherwise the legal responsibility of DOI and Indian Affairs.



Erosion has exposed Cibecue Community School’s potable water line (see orange bordered area) making the line subject to freezing and breaking.

examine water vary depending on the system type, i.e., school-only or community.

“Because many of our locations are remote and the Indian Affairs-funded water system is the only source of quality water, we want to make sure the facilities and the operating and testing procedures are in place to provide reliable, quality water,” said OFMC Deputy Director Emerson Eskeets.